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THE VISION OF GURSIKH (THE DISCIPLE OF THE GURU) IN GURBANI

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THE VISION OF GURSIKH (THE DISCIPLE OF THE GURU) IN GURBANI

The Gursikh, the Gurmukh or Brahmgyani (A man having divine knowledge and experience) or Khalsa (the pure) is the ideal man of the Gurus whom they tried to carve in their own image. On the basis of his actions and qualities, the Gurus have divided man into two categories 'Gurmukh' and 'Manmukh.' If a man controls his evil impulses, his 'humai' (ego) and attunes himself to God, he becomes a 'Gurmukh' a God-dedicated soul. But if he forgets God and does not control his evil impulses he degenerates and becomes a 'Manmukh', self-willed egoist away from God. The 'Manmukh' is attached to worldly wealth, worldly allurements and sensual enjoyments. His desires are unlimited. On the other hand a Gursikh (Disciple of the Guru) or Gurmukh is the purest of the pure. His mind with divine light and knowledge is illumined. Meditating over the name of God he enjoys supreme bliss. He is compassionate and serves humanity. Like a fully blossomed flower he scatters his fragrance around and beautifies the world with his benign presence.

On the other hand, the 'Manmukh' the self-willed egocentric practises falsehood and sin. He is led astray by greed and ego. He is enveloped by the darkness of ignorance. He is tossed in bondage from birth to birth.

He writes in pain day and night
And the noose of Death is round his neck
He gets not peace even in his dreams
And anxiety Tears at his heart¹

In Gurbani, the example of Ravana is quoted to distinguish between Gurmukh and Manmukh. He was a great pundit and had mastered all the Shastras and Vedas and yet he could not control his lust for revenge and sex. The animal, the Manmukh took the better of him and led to his destruction.

The Gurus were God-dedicated enlightened souls who sacrificed their all for the good of society. The masses of the times were steeped in ignorance, superstitions and inertia. They tried to transform them into a spiritually, morally, socially and physically sturdy people. They have depicted the ideal of a Gursikh in detail in Gurbani, and have codes of conduct and daily routine to follow to become an ideal perfect man. If we piece these ideas together lying here and there in Gurbani we can easily have a vision of Gursikh. The Gurus enumerate the characteristics of a spiritually enlightened Gursikh in detail and call him Brahm-Gyani or Gurmukh. Guru Arjan Dev describes in Sukhmani the character, personality and spiritual powers of Brahm Gyani. According to him a Brahm Gyani is one who has attained perfect knowledge and experience of God. He is a fully God-illuminated soul who ever lives in the highest spiritual state. He is nourished by divine knowledge. He lives like a lotus flower in the world. He believes in the brotherhood of man and fatherhood of God. There is constant urge in him for goodness. His deeds are godly. There is peace and contentment in his life.

- He is one with the Formless one
- He works for the welfare of humanity
- He showers compassion on all men
- He can do no evil act
- He regards all men equal
- Noble and pure are the paths of his life
- He is nourished by divine knowledge
- He knows God and contemplates none but God.¹

The word 'Sikh' is the 'apbhransa' of the Sanskrit word 'Shishya' which literally means a disciple and Sikhism is a disciplined creed, a discipline of the body, mind and soul. In other words Sikhism is disciplinism.² The Sikh Gurus attach great importance to the role of the Guru in the development of the personality of the disciple. One cannot think of any spiritual, moral, mental, or social

1. Guru Arjan, Sukhmani, A-G, P. 272-73
2. Sher Singh-Social and Political Philosophy of Guru Gobind Singh, p. 128

development of the disciple without the help of the Guru. The ennobling touch of his enlightened divine personality transforms the life of the disciple. He is a light kindling other lights, an awakened soul awakening other souls. It is with the help of the true Guru that the mind of the disciple is cleansed and emancipated. The veil of ego is torn asunder and he sees God every where.

The egg of superstition hath burst,
The mind is illumined,
The Guru hath cut the fetters of the feet,
And freed the captive.¹

On meeting the true Guru, the disciple becomes pure by adopting the discipline of truth. The disciple who serves the Guru and analyses his teaching finds jewels and rubies in it. He bathes his mind in the nectar of knowledge which contains the purifying elements of sixty eight 'Tirathas'. There is no 'Tirath' like the Guru Gopal

The Gursikh (disciple) becomes Gurmukh, a God centred soul with the grace of the Guru. He is blessed with Name, compassion and purity. Activity based on the Guru's word makes him ethically perfect. He keeps this motto before him.

"Truth is high but higher still is truthfull living".²

Thus in moulding the career of the Gursikh (the disciple), the personality of the Guru is all along operative, commanding his whole being and shaping his life to its divine issues. Without such a personality there would be no cohesion, no direction in the moral forces of society and instead of a thousand kinds of knowledge there would still be utter darkness.³

This transformation of the disciple comes through close association with the Guru. This relationship with the Guru does not remain on physical level. It becomes communion of the soul with

1. M.V., A.G., P. 1002

2. M.I., Sri Rag, A.G., P. 43

3. Teja Singh. The Sikh Religion, S.G.P.C., Amritsar - p. 19

the soul. The ray is united with the sun. Water blends with water. Light blends with light. There is complete identification of the Guru with the disciple. Perfection is achieved. Lehna becomes Angad, the flesh of his master's flesh and the bone of his master's bone. The Guru bows before the disciple and hails him as the Guru.

"He who lives the right life is my disciple,
Nay, he is my master and I am his servant"¹

This identification of the Guru, with the disciple is a unique phenomena of the teachings of the Sikh Gurus.

Characteristics of the Gursikh (The Disciple)

In Sidhghost, the yogis ask Guru Nanak, "Who is your Guru? Whose disciple you are?" Guru Nanak replies "The word (Shabad) is the Guru and the mind attuned to the Shabad is the disciple."² In this dialogue, we have the definition of both the Guru and the disciple. A true disciple is one who is fully attuned to the Guru's word. A disciple is one who follows the discipline of the Guru. A disciple of the Guru's concept found in the verses of Gurbani has got the following qualities :

1. The Disciple follows the Discipline of the Guru :

The Gurus have attached great importance to discipline. "He alone loves God, whose mind is disciplined"³, holds Guru Nanak. In Japuji he says that discipline is the quality which breathes life in the process of building an enlightened personality. "I am not enamoured of a sikh for what he is but what is dear to my heart is his disciplined conduct"⁴, says Guru Gobind Singh.

Sehaj is the state of enlightenment achieved through self-discipline and is accepted to be the ultimate goal which the religious

1. Desa Singh-Rahitnama (Ed.) Sant Sampuran Singh, Amritsar, 1946
2. M. I., Sidhghost-A.G., P. 943
3. M. I., Rag Asa, A.G., P. 465
4. Guru Gobind Singh's "Tankahnama" included in Bhai Kahan Singh's "Gurmat Sudhakar", Language Dept., Punjab 1970, P. 267

and spiritual discipline laid down by Guru Nanak was supposed to lead to¹, meaning thereby that the goal of life and education is union with God. This goal can be achieved with the help of 'Sadhana' or discipline. The way itself is meditation, with adoring love, upon divine qualities. The result is the cleansing and disciplining of the mind which leads to union with God.²

The Gurus have used the words 'Hukum' (Divine ordinance), 'Sanjam' (Discipline), 'Bhau' (fear of God) and 'Santokh' (contentment, resignation to the will of God) for discipline. In the very first stanza of 'Japji' Guru Nanak points out very clearly that man's aim of life is to become a seer of truth by removing the veil of ego which stands between him and God. A Gursikh can be successful in this endeavour if he follows the 'Hukam' of the master.

"How shall then we know the truth ?

How shall we rend the veil of untruth away ?

Abide thou by His will (Hukum)

And make thine own His will,

O Nanak, thus is truth attained.³

To follow God's ordinance (Hukum) is to set up spiritual discipline in life. Then only one can become seeker after truth. In Asa-di-war, Guru Nanak has given the characteristics of a disciplined man which can help us to form an idea of his concept of Gursikh.

"It is the man of true discipline, indeed,

Who can serve the world properly,

It is the man of true discipline, indeed,

Who contemplate God, the all-Truth, Reality,

Who do not step on the wrong path,

Who practise religion through performance of noble deeds,

Who observe the path of moderation,

In the matter of food and drink,

1. Niharranjan Ray, Sikh Gurus and Sikh Society, P. 117

2. W.H. McLeod-Guru Nanak and the Sikh Religion-Pp. 207-208

3. M. I. Japji, A.G., P.I.

Who dedicate themselves to God,

And they attain God the great,

Through evolution of the greatness of His name in life".¹

In simple words we can say that discipline is the training of the body, mind and soul, to act according to rules, orders and regulations. It means moderation, control, sublimation and balance in our thought, word, deed and desire. It is the root of all the virtues. Without it men become slaves of their wild desires. The disciple should impose self-discipline on himself to become a real Gursikh.

This discipline of Guruji's conception has got four aspects, physical, mental, moral and spiritual. Gradual and voluntary discipline of the mind and body will bring out the essential goodness inherent in the Gursikh. Physical discipline consists in keeping the body healthy, neat and clean and keeping the senses under control.

"One controlling one's senses is the master of true discipline."²

Physical discipline emphasizes a life of action, hard labour and service to humanity. By controlling will, by subduing wild passions with the force of true love and by honestly doing the duties of a householder, rather than becoming a recluse or ascetic, the Gursikh disciplines his life.

"Even with stern bodily discipline,

With austerities performed head downwards

Egoism still may not leave the mind,

Ritual actions bring not realization."³

In mental discipline, the Gurus emphasize the conquest of the mind. Conquering the mind is the conquest of the world.⁴ The preparation for this conquest lies along the path of meditation or concentration on God and the destruction or effacement of egotism (haumai). Mental discipline depends upon the purification of one's

1. M. I., Asa-di-War, A.G., P. 466.

2. M-III, Quoted by G.S. Talib-Bani of Sri Guru Amar Dass,
P. 128

3. M-III, Ibid, P. 18

4. Japji, P. 6

inner being. How can one achieve that ? Guru Nanak's clear answer is by loving devotion and adoration of God and remembrance of His name.

"The Gursikh abides in the Lord's fear
And, through the word overwhelms the wild (mind)
He sings the immaculate praise of God,
He contemplates the Lord, body and soul,
And so merges he in Truth."¹

The Gurus have greatly emphasized spiritual discipline. Self purification, love and devotion, concentration and meditation on God, association with holy people, service to mankind and good actions are essential for the spiritual discipline of a Gursikh. Humility, self-effacement, the dedication of the mind, body and soul to the cause of truth lead to it. This spiritual discipline recommended by the Gurus does not believe in physical torture and self-denial.

The inculcation of discipline in life requires obedience to superior authority on the part of Gursikh. The ideal of surrender and devotion is the basis of discipline. Submission to the will of God and Guru is essential.

2. A Fully Dedicated Soul

The Gursikh or disciple is a fully dedicated soul. He is a seeker after truth. He does not take things for granted. He verifies their truth in the real spirit of a researcher. He believes in the essence of religion and not in its outward trappings. He lives a worldly disciplined life. He has a strong sense of service for the Guru and the general mankind. He possesses fullest dedication and concentration. Guru Nanak says :

"The true disciple serves God
By dedicating his actions to him.
His life is imbued with the
Nectar of Name and Truth.
By reflecting on the Guru's word

1. M. I., Sidh-ghost-A.G., P. 941.

The disciple has learnt this,
 That it is through the Lord's grace
 That one is ferried across,
 Verily, the way of true disciple is
 The way of Karam Yoga
 Which is inspired by God's grace
 The way surely takes him across
 The ocean of life
 With the laurels of success, glory and honour.²

The Gursikh or the disciple of the Guru's conception has great reverence for the teacher. He has implicit faith in the Guru, because he knows that love and devotion enlighten the mind. He places himself fully in the hands of the Guru because he knows that he will be able to achieve his aim of self-realization and develop his latent potentialities with his help only. For him Guru is a beacon light who shows him the right path. That is why he is ready to sacrifice himself for his Guru.

"I am a sacrifice to my Guru
 A myriad times a day
 Who makes angels of men
 And yea without delay".²

3. Obedience to the Guru and Unconditional Surrender

Tradition affirms that towards the close of his life, Guru Nanak began a systematic trial of his disciples, his object being to select someone worthy of Guruship after his death. These trials generally took the form of apparently unreasonable commands at unreasonable times by the Guru over those around him. Only Lehna came successful out of these ordeals as he obeyed him without questioning and hesitation. These trials show that the first and foremost quality a disciple of the Guru's conception should possess is implicit obedience and unconditional surrender to the Guru. Guru Nanak tried Lehna and found him pure like gold and altogether fit for the exalted office of the Guru.

1. M. I., A. G., P. 465

2. M. I., A. G., P. 463

"Between thee and me there is now no difference. None of my Sikhs hath such faith and confidence in me as thou and therefore I love thee most of all. Thou are verily Angad, a part of my body.¹

The principal qualities of Guru Angad's character were devoted service and love of the Guru. He was an embodiment of obedience. He had made great progress in virtue and spirituality. It was due to these qualities that he succeeded to Guruship in the teeth of opposition by the wife, sons and relations of Guru Nanak. For the same reasons, Guru Angad, inspite of the opposition of his own relatives, conferred the Guruship on Amar Dass who proved to be the most worthy of this high dignity. Guru Amar Dass found Jetha (Ram Dass) the incarnation of devotion, religiosity, nobility and humility. He performed such unremitting service day and night for the Guru that he allowed himself no repose of mind and body. Such examples can be multiplied from the lives of the successor Gurus, which show that according to the Sikh tradition, the *sin-qua-non* of eligibility to the Guruship, or in other words, the essential requisite of an ideal disciple was implicit surrender to the Guru '*Sacrificium intellectus*' as Trumpp would call it.² Guru Nanak has also expressed this idea in these words :

"If thou desires to play at love with me
Come my way with thy head in the palm of thy hand,
Put thy feet on this road
Give thy head and care not other's opinion."³

Here is a demand for complete self-sacrifice. In the same strain, Guru Amar Dass asks his disciples to entrust body, mind and soul to the Guru and obey his order if they really wanted to succeed :

"Sikhs of the Guru and friends walk in God's way
Faithfully obey what the Guru preacheth.

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1. Macauliffe, Life of Guru Angad, Sikh Religion, Vol. II, P. 9.
 2. Trumpp, Adi Granth, P. LXXVII
 3. M.I., A.G., P. 1412

Hear, servants of God and brethren,
 Serve the Guru very promptly.
 Tie up service to the Guru as
 Thy travelling expenses of the journey to God
 Think not of-to-day or to-morrow".¹

Absolute surrender to the Guru is one of the fundamental qualities of a disciple according to the Sikh Gurus. This devotion for the Guru on the part of the disciple conforms with Indian tradition. Charaka states that the pupil should serve his teacher as he serves Agni, Deva, King, Father and Master with steady devotion. In the farewell address at the end of his teaching pupil was advised to serve his Guru like a God.² He was advised to remain obedient to his teacher till his end. Thus respect for the Guru is typical of Indian tradition. Respect for the Guru and devotion to him is necessary if one's education is to be successful. Even in modern times Gandhi advocates devotion to the teacher (Gurubakhti). He felt that in the absence of devotion to the teacher education would be dissipated and the building of character difficult to achieve.

Love and respect on the part of the disciple is equally reciprocated by the Guru who is deeply attached to his disciple. Guru Gobind Singh took his disciples as his Gurus. Once he folded his hands before them and requested to be baptized by them. As one lamp is lit from another, in the same way, the Guru enlightens the personality of the disciple and there comes a time when the disciple achieves such perfection that there remains no difference between the Guru and the disciple; the two are identical. Guru Ram Dass says :

"The Guru is in the Sikh,
 The Sikh in the Guru,
 For both (promote) the instructions of the great Guru (God)"³

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1. Guru Ram Dass, Quoted by Macauliffe, P. 325
 2. F. E. Keay-Education in Ancient and Latter Times-P. 24.
 3. M. IV, A.G., P. 444

And Bhai Gurdas asserts again and again that. "The Guru is the Sikh (disciple) and the Sikh (disciple) is the Guru. There is difference between the two"¹

But this discipline of the Guru is not the discipline of a hard-task-master. This discipline of the Guru imposed upon his pupil is inspired by abundant love, compassion and understanding for the pupil. The motive behind is the enrichment and refinement of pupil's personality. And when the pupil's personality is fully developed, the Guru does not hesitate to hail the pupil as the Guru. "He who undergoes the discipline is the true disciple, he is my master, and I am his disciple", says the Tenth master.

The Gurus preserved the ancient Indian tradition of the final relationship between the teacher and the taught. The teacher was regarded as the spiritual father of his pupils.² This mystical union between the teacher and the taught is quite unique in the history of our educational thought and practice.

4. Discipline of Body, Mind and Spirit

The Gurus ask their Sikhs to discipline their physical, mental and spiritual faculties. The body is the gift of God and the disciple should keep it in a healthy condition by regular habits and good diet taken in moderation. He is not to torture it by keeping fasts and doing ascetic exercises. Smoking and use of intoxicants are prohibited.

' Avoid such foods which cause pain to the body

And arouse passion in the mind

Avoid such dresses which cause pain to the body

And arouse passion in the mind.³

These disciplinary regulations act unceasingly as impersonal teachers. Such type of disciplinary practices have been in vogue in India since times immemorial. The pupil was trained to a simple life, whether he was rich or poor and habits of discipline, reverence and self-respect were inculcated. Chastity was strictly

1. Bhai Gurdas-Var-3/11, 9/16, 13/1, 15/16

2. Panchtantra-1/21

3. M. I., A.G., P. 16

enjoined. The period of studentship of the Brahmachari was regarded as a period of discipline in an ashrama.¹ The Gurus also emphasize physical chastity. According to Guru Nanak the company of another woman is venomous like a snake. Guru Gobind Singh asks his disciples to love their own spouses ardently but not to step into the bed of another woman even in dreams.²

The disciple of the Guru's conception is a seeker after truth. Ignorance is a spiritual bondage. The Gurus emphasize mental discipline through acquisition of knowledge. Guru Nanak gives three steps for the cultivation of knowledge. These three steps are Suniya (hearing or listening), Manne (believing or accepting or thinking), Ek Dhyān (concentration, assimilation or synthesis). "Complete knowledge can be attained only when the disciple first listens to the words of the Guru. Next he meditates and having reflected and meditated he assimilates the truth so gained."

Suniya (hearing) is the first step of acquiring knowledge. What should a seeker hear about? He should hear about the lives of the persons who have attained self realization. He should listen to the holy songs and the great qualities of the supreme being sung by the holy musicians in the holy congregation or sangat in a holy place or Dharam sala. Such hearing will lead to a perpetual transformation of the mind because as one thinks so one becomes. Guru Nanak asks the seeker to listen to the explanation of the moral principles and learn about such fundamental qualities like wisdom, contentment and purity. He should implement in thought, word and deed every thing that has been listened to. This hearing leads to the expansion of the consciousness and attainment of divine wisdom on the part of the disciple.

"By hearing comes the truthfulness,

Contentedness and wisdom

And purification of bathing in the water of

1. Op-cit., Keay-PP 25-26

2. Dasam Granth, P-842

"Sixty-eight holy places, is attained by it."¹

But the mere hearing of knowledge is not sufficient. Knowledge to be properly assimilated must be believed, accepted and reflected upon and assimilated. It is through reflective meditation and assimilation that awareness of mind and intellect are fashioned and sharpened. The seeker is able to realise the true nature of reality and avoid the wrong path. Guru Amar Dass refers to this discriminatory power as 'vivek-budhi', discriminating intellect. Guru Nanak says that a man of reflection and assimilation receives great honour. He realizes knowledge and becomes a benefactor of humanity. "Logical reflection and disciplined meditation awakens higher consciousness and wisdom in man and then he is able to perceive true wisdom of entire creation".

"The importance of 'mannan' is beyond description

With 'mannan', the mind and intellect are awakened,

With 'mannan', the significance of all regions is perceived,

With 'mannan', the disciple of the Guru is liberated

and gets others liberated."²

Mere intellectual development without the development of character, learning without piety, proficiency in the sacred lore with a deficiency in practice may pervert the very goal of student-ship. Ethical conduct is the basis of spiritual life. Truth is high but higher still is truthful living. There can be no worship without good actions. According to Guru Nanak the mark of an educated person is that he contemplates upon the higher values of life.

"He alone is a wise man,

Who gains practical enlightenment of life,

Through meditation upon the divine virtues".³

1. M.I., A.G., P. 3

...Shuk-Rahas-Upnishad Part III, Canto XIII

अबरां तु गुरोः पूर्वं मननं लब्धतरम्

निदिच्छासनमित्येतत्पूर्णं बाधेभ्यः कारणम्

2. M.I., A.G., P. 3

3. M.I., Onkar A.G., P. 931.

Divine knowledge can be obtained through the practical evolution of higher values alone. And these virtues like our friends help us to overcome vices.

"Nanak, as many are the vices,
So many are the chains round our neck,
Yea, one removeth vice with virtue
For the virtue is our only friend"¹

For moral and spiritual discipline, Guru Nanak wants his disciple to overcome evil impulses and vices like Kam (concupiscence), Karodh (anger), Lobh (covetousness), Moh (attachment) and Ahnkar (pride). These are called the thieves and burglars which continuously steal away all the merit. Lust, wrath and avarice is the three-fold way to hell, says Gita.

"Attachment leads to desire, desire to anger,
anger to delusion, delusion to confused memory
and confused memory to destruction of reason."²

If the disciple overcomes these evils, he can then discipline the mind. He can slay these five thieves of desire through the Guru's word. He can fight with them armed with the sword of wisdom.

"If the disciple overcomes his lust and wrath
and I - am-ness
And slays the five thieves (of desire) through
the Guru's word,
And struggles with the mind, armed with the
sword of wisdom,
His desire merges in the mind, from where
it issued forth."³

1. (M I, Rag Sorath, A. G., P. 62)

2. Gita Chapter II - Cant-62-63

ध्यायतो विषयान्पुंसः सङ्गस्तेषूपजायते

संयात्संजायते कामः कामात्क्रोधोभिजायते ।

क्रोधाद्भवति संमोहः; समोहात्स्मृतिविभ्रमः

स्मृतिभ्रंशं बुद्धिदनाशो बुद्धि-नाशश्च तत्रास्वति ।

3. M.I., A.G., P. 1022

The disciple is not to run away from these impulses but he is to move among the sense objects with senses self-restrained. He is to sublimate his passions by substituting virtues and higher values of life for them. And these virtues like his faithful friends will help him to overcome these vices.

For the mental and spiritual discipline of their disciples, the Gurus have laid down certain codes of conduct. In 'Sidhgosht', Guru Nanak gives six simple points of code of conduct for building character and disciplining the mind of the disciple. The disciple should not falter on seeing the riches and beauty of other persons. He should observe temperance in food and sleep. He should eat little and sleep little. The hunger of mind should be satiated and it can be done only by disciplining the mind with name. Next the disciple should deal in truth and shun falsehood. He should seek the Guru's grace in the form of holy word i.e. Gur Shabad. He should lead life like a lotus flower or a duck which floats carefree in water. He should be a servant of humanity and share his earnings with the needy and the poor. Bhai Gurdas has very beautifully described this aspect of his personality.

“His hands are busy helping the needy,
His hands are busy comforting the weary,
His hands are busy serving the lowly,
His hands are busy washing their feet,
Magnanimous, tolerant and serene,
He lives in the service of humanity”.¹

At the time of famous Baptismal ceremony, Guru Gobind Singh asked his disciples to take certain vows of discipline and wear five symbols which are Kes (unshorn hair), Kada (the steel bangle), Kangha (the comb), Kacha (shorts or breeches), Kirpan (sword). These symbols are extremely symbolic and have got disciplinary value. They form a part of Gursikh's moral discipline. These symbols are a constant training in loyalty to the Guru. They link him with the Guru. 'This feeling of incorporation with the

1. Bhai Gurdas, Varren, Translated by Trilochan Singh, Sikh Review, April, 1959, P. 13.

Guru makes the Sikh strong beyond his ordinary power and in times of emergency comes to his rescue. Bhai Joga Singh is just a case in point. And yet in a moment of weakness this paragon of Sikh purity was going to fall at the door of a public women at Hoshiarpur. Who saved him in that emergency? It was the vision of Guru Gobind Singh re-establishing the personal contact by pointing out to the symbols worn on his body and reminding him that he was carved in the Guru's own image.¹

From the history of the Sikhs in the past as well as in the present, it is a quite evident how efficiently these baptismal forms, with the accompanying vows of purity, love and service have aided them in keeping themselves united and their ideals unsullied even in the time of the greatest trials.

Discussing the concept of discipline of Guru Nanak Me Leod gives six steps for the cultivation of spiritual discipline on the part of a disciple.

They are interior religion, loving devotion, Nam Simran, the concomitant results, the ascent, the ultimate. The life of the disciple becomes spiritually fully disciplined by following these steps. True religion is to be found not in external practices but in the inward discipline of love, faith, mercy and humility expressed in righteous and compassionate deeds and in the upholding of all that is true. Religion is inward and its basic expression is the loving devotion for the Formless Lord. It is through the singing of his praises that the disciple finds a place in the Lord's court. Nam Simran helps in cleansing the mind defined by sins and evil impulses. If the mind be defiled by sin it is cleansed with love of the Name". Repeating the Name of the true Lord means engrafting Him in the 'man' (mind)".

This meditation on the nature and qualities of God is the core of Guru Nanak's religious discipline. The mind (man) cleansed of ego (Haumai) and purged of evil passions, purified and disciplined by meditation and Nam Simram ceases to be disciple's enemy and is transformed instead into his ally.

1. Teja Singh Essays in Sikhism-P. 55

To become a real Brham Gyani, Gursikh must pass through the five grades of spiritual journey which are Dharam Khand (the realm of knowledge), Saram Khand (the realm of action or divine grace), Sach Khand (the realm of divine truth). The disciple has to pass through these realms to become fully accomplished. It is the path of the knowledge, action and devotion-all the three put together. This blend of Gyan (knowledge), Karam (action) and Bhakti (devotion) leads to balanced spiritual development. Then the disciple reaches the Ultimate, the abode of the Formless Lord and is united with him. And it is condition of peace, of consummate Joy and perfect tranquility, a condition transcending all human telling.

5. A Fully Blossomed Personality :

"You are the embodiment of light O' man,
Recognise the essence of your own self."¹

The Gurus believe that man is blessed with unlimited powers. "In the mine of the human soul there are so many gems and jewels of faculties waiting for development only if one cares to listen to the voice of the Guru".² The body is the temple of God. In it are revealed precious pearls of knowledge.³

But these precious pearls of knowledge can be discovered with the help of Guru. As stated above the Gursikh is a fully devoted soul. He has got great reverence for the Guru who helps in the harmonious development of his personality. A Gursikh is a fully developed personality spiritually, emotionally morally physically and socially. Arise, awake and stop not till the goal is reached is the essence of Upanishadas. According to the Gurus real education enables a Gursikh to gain self realization and self-manifestation in a spontaneous way. A real Gursikh is one who enlightens his mind with divine knowledge and realizes himself by putting the garland of Ram Nam round this neck

1. M. III-A.G., P. 441

2. M. I-Jap-A.G., P. 2.

3. M. III-Rag Prabhati, A.G., P. 1346

An educated person, a scholar, or a seer is one,
Who puts the garland of Ram Nam round his neck.¹

True education enables a Gursikh to attune himself to God.
The Guru helps to enlighten his mind with divine knowledge to realize himself.

Who is a man of wisdom ?

Says Nanak, He who realizes his
Ownself and understandeth God.²

He alone is learned and educated,
Who gains self-knowledge through
Self-enlightenment.³

“Of all the elements, the most significant is the element of knowledge”.⁴ “For the enlightenment of his mind and soul, the Gursikh becomes a seeker of knowledge. He cleans his mind with the jewel of wisdom and it is soiled not again. Just as darkness disappears when the lamp is lighted, similarly through the study of the books of wisdom, ignorance of the mind of a Gursikh is removed. It becomes clean and does not get dirty again.

One can clean the mind with the jewel of wisdom,
And there after it is soiled not again.⁵

A Gursikh has got qualities of head and heart. The Gurus regard the development of virtues in life essential to endear the self to divine. It is like charming ones love with the charm of virtues. Immoral conduct can never be a basis of spiritual progress. A real Gursikh is one who inculcate divine virtues in his personality.

A person may read a large number of books and acquire degrees but he will not be considered an educated person if he suffers from selfishness, greed and ego.

1. M.I.-Onkar A.G., P. 938
2. M.I., Sri Rag-A.G., P. 25
3. M. II., Rag Basant, A.G., P. 1182
4. M.I., Rag Gauri-A.G., P. 152
5. M.I., Rag Maru, A.G., P. 992

"An educated person is a fool
If he indulges in ego, greed and lust."¹

There can be no worship without doing good acts. The real ascetic is one who smears his body with divinely virtues.

"Let divine wisdom be thy Guru and enlighten your soul,
As with ashes, smear thy body with the love of God,
Eat little, sleep little, be compassionate and forgiving
Be calm and contented.
Then will you pass beyond the three states,
Hold not close in your heart,
Lust, anger, greed, obstinate self-hood,
Or love of worldly things,
Then shall thou behold that which is real,
And attain the one Lord."²

Emotionally, a Gursikh is a balanced personality as the singing of God's praises in Sadh sangat (Holy Company) contributes to his emotional enrichment. Recitation of Gurbani in congregation leads to his emotional and aesthetic development. Singing of Gurbani elevates his character and brings strength and solace to his mind in the sorrows and struggles of his day to day life. It gives him solace and peace of mind. It strengthens him morally. That is why Guru Arjun says-

The Bani is the Guru and
the Guru is the Bani,
For all the nectars are enshrined in it.³

'Sport and play are mind's amusement', says Guru Nanak.⁴ In Sidh-Gosht, Guru Nanak administers the "Sidhas" not to torture and starve their bodies in the hope of finding salvation. "Body is the vehicle of the soul, so it must be kept in a fit, strong and healthy condition. It is the basis of the performance of various worldly duties and hence must be kept in perfect order. The Sikh

1. M.I. Var Maj. A.G., P. 140

2. Guru Gobind Singh-Dasam Granth-P. 705

3. M. V., P. 982

4. M.I., Rag Asa, A.G., P. 465.

Gurus emphasized the physical fitness of their followers which afterwards culminated in the martial development of the Sikhs by Guru Hargobind and Guru Gobind Singh and turned the Sikhs into a martial community.

A Gursikh is alive to the development of his physical body. It is the abode of God. He keeps himself physically fit and is ever youthful. Hardwork and dignity of labour keep him physically strong. He is the embodiment of Bhakti and Shakti.

Service of men is service of God. A real Gursikh is one who does good to others. The ideal of Bhai Kanahya inspires him to serve humanity irrespective of caste and creed. The Gurus sacrificed their all for the welfare of humanity and upliftment of society. The Gursikh keeps the three cardinal principles of Guru Nanak's teachings "Kirt Karna" (to earn one's livelihood by the sweat of one's brow), Vand Chakana (to share one's earnings with the needy) and Nam Japna (meditating over the name of God) before him and becomes a benefactor of society and wins glory, beauty and joy of life.

"We can get an honourable seat in the court of God
Only when we practise disinterested service in the world.
And thus win glory, beauty and joy of life".¹

For social development, the Gurus attach great importance to 'Sadh Sangat' i. e. association with the pious. The society of the saints is the school where one is instructed in the merits of God.² God dwells in the company of the saints.³

By holy association the lamp of divine light is lit. One is blessed with wisdom. There are discussions and discourses. One is purged of one's evil impulses in a saintly company. Sajjan Thug came in contact with Guru Nanak and was transformed.

Sadh Sangat helps the Gursikh not only in spiritual progress but social development also. Barriers of caste and creed are removed. He works and dines with others. Virtues like fellow-

1. M.I., Sri Rag, A.G., P. 26

2. M.V., A.G., P. 1316

3. M.I., Sri Rag, A.G., P. 72

belonging co-operation, tolerance, love and sympathy are developed. How Sadh Sangat trains a Gursikh in social and civic efficiency is described by the fifth Guru very beautifully-

"I have forgotten to speak or think ill of any one,
Ever since I learn to live in the company of the good and
holy saints,

No one is my enemy nor is any one stranger to me
I get on well (am on good terms) with one and all."¹

Thus we see that the Gursikh of the Guru's conception is an ideal-balanced perfect man. He is ever in bliss. The examples of Guru Arjun, Guru Tegh Bahadur, Guru Gobind Singh and his children inspire him to suffer the hardships of life silently and reconcile to the will of God. The joys and sorrows, honour and dishonour are equal to him. With fully blossomed personality he merges in God as water mingles with water, the ray is united with the sun, perfection is achieved.

"The man that in suffering feels not affliction.
Is by pleasures, attachment and fear unaffected,
And holds gold and dust alike
Who by slander and praise is not affected,
Nor by avarice, attachment and pride,
Who to joy and sorrow keeps unattached,
And frees himself from all desire,
Abjures lust and wrath,
In the mind of such a one dwells the supreme Being.
One by divine grace favoured,
Does this way of life learn.
Saith Nanak : such a one into the lord is merged
As water into water."²

5. Daily Routine

1. M.I., A.G., P. 1299
2. M. IX, A.G., P. 634

For the fullest development of the personality of the disciple, Guru Nanak recommends a special daily routine that leads to a disciplined way of life. The disciple travelling on the road to perfection has to spend his way in the planned manner. He does not lead the life of an ascetic and undergo penances like the ancient Indian disciple. He participates actively in the daily activities of life. He earns his livelihood with the sweat of his brow. He believes in dignity of labour.

"Namdeya asks Trilochana,
Remember the Name of the Lord in heart.
Do work with hands and feet.
Attuning yourself to the Lord."¹

These lines of Kabir embody the philosophy of action and labour of the Gurus. The Gurus stand for a life of action. They believe that man can carve out his destiny through his own efforts. They believe in the philosophy of Karmayoga of Gita. Sikh religion is a religion of action. It does not favour the life of a recluse or an ascetic. The example of Banda Bahadur is well known. He led the life of an ascetic and penance far away from society. Guru Gobind Singh went to him and explained to him the futility of such a useless life. He advised him not to waste his energy and power but utilize it for the service of humanity. From Madho Dass Baragi he became Banda Bahadur. From the life of inaction the Guru brought him into the life of action. Thus the daily routine of the disciple consists of singing the Lord's praises with lips and doing work with hands. Guru Ram Dass lays down the daily routine of a disciple in these words :

"He who deems himself a Sikh of the true Guru
Should rise early morning and contemplate the Name.
In the early hours of the morning he should rise and bathe.
And cleanse his soul in a tank of nectar

1. Kabir, A.G., P. 1376

As he repeats the Name the Guru taught him
 Thus he washed away the sins of his soul,
 Then at dawn he should sing the hymns of the Guru
 And throughout all the busyness of the day
 He should hold in his heart the Name,
 He who repeats the Name with every breath
 Such a Sikh is indeed dear to the Guru.
 The Sikh that wins the favour of the Lord
 Has received the gift of the Lord's Name from the Guru
 Nanak seeks to kiss the dust under the feet of such a Sikh
 Who utters the Name and inspires others to do so.¹

Bhai Gurdas also enumerates the following daily activities of a disciple.

"A disciple gets up early in the morning and takes bath. After reading Guru's words, he goes to Dharamsala. There he sits in the holy congregation and intently listens to Gurbani with a devout heart. He renders service to his fellow-beings indiscriminately. He earns his livelihood in a righteous way and shares his food with others. He rather feeds others first but himself takes what is left over. At sunset he again attends to his prayers at the Dharamsala."²
 The same daily routine with recitation of Rehras in the evening and Kirtan Sohila at bed-time is prescribed for a disciple in almost every Rahitnama or code of conduct. The disciple is thus given a simple and well-planned schedule of activities which help him to become a true Gursikh and attain happiness in life.

"You live your life making earnest efforts
 And make your life happy through rightful
 earnings.

Meet thy Lord through contemplation
 And your anxieties will be dispelled."³

1. M. IV, A.G., P. 305-306
2. Bhai Gurdas-Var 3/40
3. M.V., Rag Gauri, A.G., P. 522

Guru Gobind Singh called upon his disciples to sing God's praises with their lips but meditate war in their hearts. He wanted to build a society of saint soldiers who with the broom of knowledge should sweep away the dirt of cowardice. The daily prayer of a Gursikh is that he should die fighting valiantly and heroically in the battle of life to save his own honour and the honour of his country men.

"Give me this power O Almighty
From righteous deeds I may never refrain
Fearlessly may I fight all the battles of life,
With confident courage claiming the victory,
May my highest ambitions be to sing thy praises
And may thy glory be ingrained in my heart
When this mortal life reaches its end,
May I die fighting with limitless courage
In the battle of life"¹

1. Guru Gobind Singh, Dasam Garanth, P. 99



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